



ENTER God's presence

For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favour and honour; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you. Psalm 84:11-12

God of grace and truth, open our hearts and minds so we might encounter more of your truth as we gather around your word. May we grow in your grace so that the light of your truth might shine through us to others. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. Where have you seen God's power at work in your life this last week?
2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?
3. Share a time when you were treated unfairly. What was so unfair about the situation?
4. How do you determine if something is fair?
5. What does the word GRACE mean to you? How would you describe it to someone?

It's not fair!" Said every child to every parent ever. How many times has that been said over the last six weeks as freedoms have been curtailed? How many people have uttered those words as Centrelink informs them they are not eligible for Job seeker or Job keeper. How many business owners have responded this way as some business are allowed to remain open while their own doors are shut? And every parent everywhere has said in reply: Life's not fair. We know it...We live in a world that is not fair; where some seem to always draw the short straw...get the worst of a deal...lose out...get tripped up...It's not fair. But instead of complaining about life's unfairness, Peter point to the unfairness of grace. It wasn't fair that Christ suffered and died. It wasn't fair that it cost Christ everything. But he willingly drew the short straw so we would get the benefit and blessing from the unfairness dealt to him. In a world that is harsh at the best of times, among people who will often turn their worst against your best, Jesus calls us to MOVE TOGETHER IN GRACE to bring grace to all as he brought grace to us.

Week beginning:
Sunday 17th May 2020

Worship series:
MOVE TOGETHER
In Grace (#5 in series)



VERSE for the week

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

1 Peter 3:18



REMEMBER this week

Grace is never fair. God gives it to the undeserving. But it's grace alone that saves. It's grace alone that equips us to move together as his chosen people, returning kindness for insult, patience for rudeness, love for indifference. It's grace alone that has the final word; that transforms us...and others.



LISTEN attentively

Read 1 Peter 3:13-22

- 6. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?**
- 7. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?**
- 8. We would usually say that to suffer for doing good is unfair. Peter says here that we are blessed even if we suffer for doing good. In what ways are we blessed?**

Peter reminds us that we have hope in Jesus and that this hope does not disappear when things get tough. In fact, the hope that we have in Jesus is something which causes others to question us when they see the difference that this hope makes in our lives. This hope within us is the grace of God, given to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.



GROW deeper

Read 1 Peter 3:18 again.

This is the unfairness of grace; Jesus, the righteous one, killed in place of the unrighteous.

- 9. Are we as upset about the unfairness of this situation as we ought to be, or do we sometimes overlook the unfairness Jesus suffered for our sake because we are the ones who benefit from it? Discuss.**
- 10. How would you answer someone who asked you to explain the hope you have in Jesus?**

'Grace is free but it is not cheap.' This line has been quoted in many ways by various Christians over the years and it is worth remembering. God's grace costs us nothing, but it cost him everything. This is how we know God loves us, because while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The value something has is determined by what someone is willing to pay for it. God paid the highest price to have you restored to himself. In his eyes you are worth the life of his son Jesus.

- 11. We often think of grace simply as God's forgiveness at Jesus expense and this is certainly part of it; but if we define grace simply as an undeserved gift, then we don't have a full understanding of it. What other undeserved gifts do we receive from God through faith in Jesus?**

Read Romans 12:3-8

In this passage, Paul tells us that we have different gifts according to the grace that is given to each of us. Any gift from God is an undeserved gift. Spiritual gifts are also included here. Not only the spiritual gifts that we have received, but also the gifts of others and the gift of his people, the church, are expressions of God's grace; his free and undeserved gifts to his people whom he loves.

- 12. How does understanding the lengths God went to in order to make his grace available to us, change the way you value and perceive others?**
- 13. How might considering all the undeserved good things you receive from God, change the way you perceive 'fairness' when you encounter a little undeserved suffering?**



LIVE purposefully

One of the greatest enemies to our security in the grace of God, is comparison. We often find that we are content with what we have until we see someone who has more than us, especially if we believe they deserve it less. The thing is, from God's perspective, is that we are all equally undeserving.

- 14. What is one area of your life where you feel that life has not been fair? Take some time this week to explore why you feel that way. If necessary, ask God for forgiveness for any ungracious attitudes you might be holding about that.**
- 15. Spend some time developing your 'answer' for the faith you have in Jesus. What would you say if someone asked you why you are a Christian? Share it with the group?**
- 16. Comparison works both ways, we can compare ourselves with those who have things 'better' than us and make ourselves jealous, or we can compare ourselves with those who have less and end up more thankful for what we have. As a group, or in your own time at home, spend some time compiling a list of things God has blessed you with and thank him for what he has given you.**



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for the positive direction of Australia's efforts against Coronavirus and for the relatively small number of deaths we have experienced here from the virus. Ask that he would continue to guide us and our leaders through this difficult time.
- Ask God to protect those who show their love for others by putting their own health and safety on the line, our teachers, healthcare workers, emergency service workers and defence force personnel.
- Pray for those who have lost loved ones to Coronavirus or through any other means. Ask that they would receive comfort and a deep knowledge of God's grace at this time.
- Thank God for all his good gifts. Ask for a thankful heart even when things look difficult or unfair.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], God's grace is always enough for you. Amen